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Cover: Egyptian tortoises, *Testudo kleinmanni*, in the marketplace in Cairo, Egypt. Photograph by Omar Attum.

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What Price Egyptian Herpetofauna?

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In the last several years, the exportation of North African herpetofauna to the United States has mushroomed. Neighborhood pet stores have begun to offer various species which few but well-traveled herpetologists had ever seen just a few years ago (Buskirk, 1985). Previously almost unknown, among the most popular species newly available to curious suburbanites, serious hobbyists, and zoos are the Egyptian tortoise, *Testudo kleinmanni*, and the dabb-lizard, (or mastigure, or spiny-tailed agamid) *Uromastyx aegyptius*. Although a diminishing number of the latter may have been captured within Egypt, the vast majority of the *T. kleinmanni* have been collected in Libya and transshipped from Cairo following the re-establishment of commercial relations between Libya and Egypt in 1990 (Baha el Din, 1994). Indeed, the Egyptian tortoise has become virtually extinct in Egypt, largely as a result of collection for the domestic and international pet trade, and habitat destruction (Baha el Din, 1994). The author's first-hand observations of the commercial exploitation of herpetofauna in Egypt, and its role in the international wildlife trade, are described in this paper.

Twice a week, people gather in Old Cairo under a huge citadel which dates back to the twelfth century. The purpose of this assembly is to hold an animal market, known as the "Sayyida Aisha." This bazaar of exotic and domestic animals is the center of attention for bargain-seeking animal buyers. It is located in a seedy, unhygienic quarter, unacceptable even by the standards of alley cats. Most of the vendors live in this same squalid environment along with their unfortunate living merchandise.

A wide array of animals is offered at the bazaar. Reptiles, amphibians, arachnids, birds (including birds of prey), primates, small mammals such as hedgehogs and foxes, tropical fish, and live fish food are offered along with cats, dogs and assorted pet supplies. Virtually any species of animal native to Egypt can be bought here; a variety of other African species of birds and monkeys are also to found for sale (pers. obs.). There are no restrictions to the customer based on protected status of the animal in question; money talks.

Walking down the crowded street, one finds young boys toting dice snakes (*Natrix tessellata*), which can be bought by an ordinary Egyptian for 1 Pound Egyptian (1 £E = $0.33). One quickly discovers that these dangling serpents are offered mainly as bait to customers, to interest them in buying a more valued domestic animal, such as a cat or caged bird. There is little internal demand for reptiles, mostly destined for overseas markets; hence their being subjected to neglect and particularly abject conditions. Sayyida Aisha is merely a way station for these unfortunate creatures, and the final stop for many.

At least 11 species of native snakes are kept here, often crowded together indiscriminately. Sometimes toads (mostly *Bufo regularis*) and skinks share their miserable confinement. Besides *N. tessellata*, those snakes that I could identify with confidence, representing but two of the six families native to Egypt (Marx, 1968), were: *Malpolon miolensis*, *M. monspessulanus*, *Lytorhynchus diadema*, *Spalerosophis diadema cliffordi*, *Coluber ravergieri*, *C. rhodorachis*, *Telescopus* sp., *Psammophis sibilans*, *P. schokari* and *Naja haje haje*. The four species of skinks seen were *Chalcides ocellatus*, *Eumeces schneideri*, *Sphenops sepsoides* and *Scincus scincus*. Desert monitor lizards, *Varanus griseus*, were offered for sale but *V. niloticus* was avoided by the collectors. Other lizards included the common chameleon, *Chamaeleo chamaeleon* but not the larger *C. africanus*, whose distribution in Egypt is restricted (Flower, 1933). The only agamid besides *Uromastyx aegyptius* seen for sale was the hardun, *Laudakia stellio stellio*.

In addition to *Testudo kleinmanni*, specimens of the spur-thighed tortoise, *Testudo graeca*, were offered for sale. Although not native to Egypt, this species has been sold there since at least the nineteenth century (Anderson, 1898). Animal

Egyptian tortoises, *Testudo kleinmanni*.

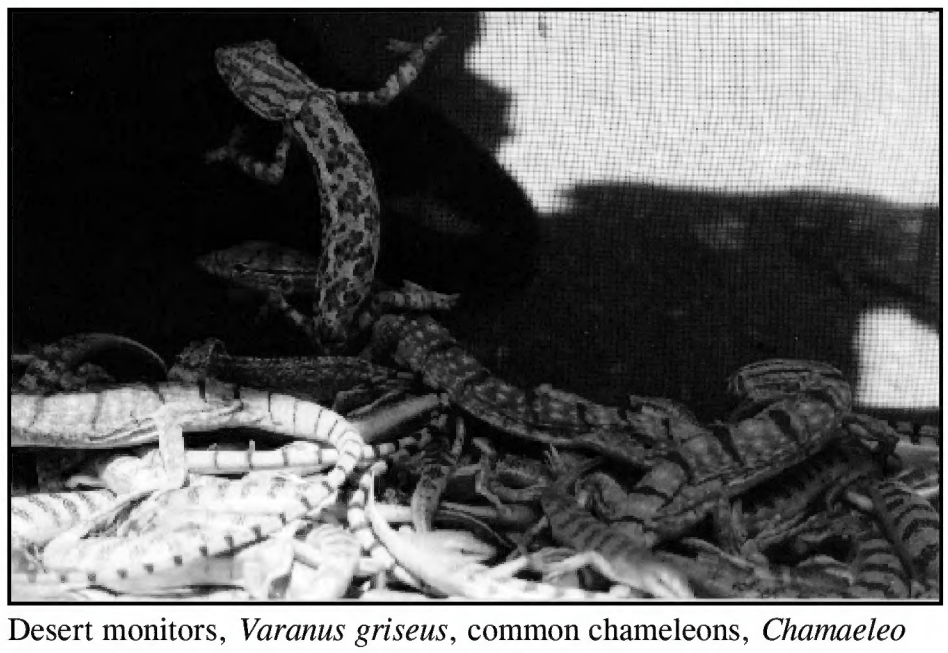
Spiny-tailed agamids, *Uromastyx aegyptius*. The avian cagemate barely visible in the background is a hoopoe, *Upupa epops*.

wholesalers in the United States have christened such tortoises exported from Egypt with improbable names such as "Egyptian Greek tortoises" or "leopard Greek tortoises." The latter term is derived form the attractive mottling of some of the Libyan spur-thighed tortoises. Because of their greater weight, these command a higher price than do Egyptian tortoises and are less often purchased by Egyptians. Indeed, few reptiles but *T. kleinmanni* and *N. tessellata* are ever bought by Cairenes. Most perish from neglect, once the initial novelty wears off. Dabb lizards and chameleons are also often prominently displayed to lure potential foreign buyers towards other reptilian merchandise, as the vendors are usually the same individuals who ship reptiles to animal wholesalers in Europe and the United States.

Reptiles in Sayyida Aisha are kept under deplorable conditions, commonly housed with cats, birds, or hedgehogs. Often various species are confined together, such as *S. scincus*, *Sphenops sepsoides*, *C. chamaeleon*, *L. stellio* and *V. griseus*. I saw combat and cannibalism among a variety of snake species kept together. For the most part, lizards and tortoises are housed in bird cages exposed to Cairo's blazing sun. There are sometimes layers of reptiles: the living on top, the dead on the bottom and the dying in between. Such stressful conditions contribute to the prompt demise or eventual death in transit of many of these unfortunate creatures.

The conditions of certain species in particular are worth highlighting. Egyptian tortoises are commonly stacked atop one another in bird cages, or in large aquaria. Droppings from birds sharing the cages often cover portions of the carapaces of the uppermost tortoises. Other tortoises are merely kept in the potato sacks in which they were brought from Libya. In time, the bottom of the sacks becomes a morgue for tortoises crushed by the weight of those above, or fatally injured in the rough handling to which the sacks are subjected. While an Egyptian might pay 5–7 £E ($1.60–2.00) per tortoise, a foreigner could expect to pay up to ten times as much.

The large lizards *Uromastyx aegyptius* and *Varanus griseus* suffer a similar fate, usually being kept in sacks with mostly dead lizards on the bottom. It is the lucky survivors on top that are purchased for around 20 £E ($6) by the infrequent Egyptian customer; a foreigner can expect to pay about four times as much. As the desert monitor is listed by CITES on Appendix I, the only export market is via smugglers. There is little demand, if any, for *Varanus* within Egypt and the species is not consistently available. When confined with other lizard species, relatively healthy desert monitors at least have the opportunity to feed on their smaller cagemates. The sandfish (*S. scincus*) were usually spared being eaten, as they would bury themselves beneath other dead lizards. Reptiles being offered water was never witnessed.

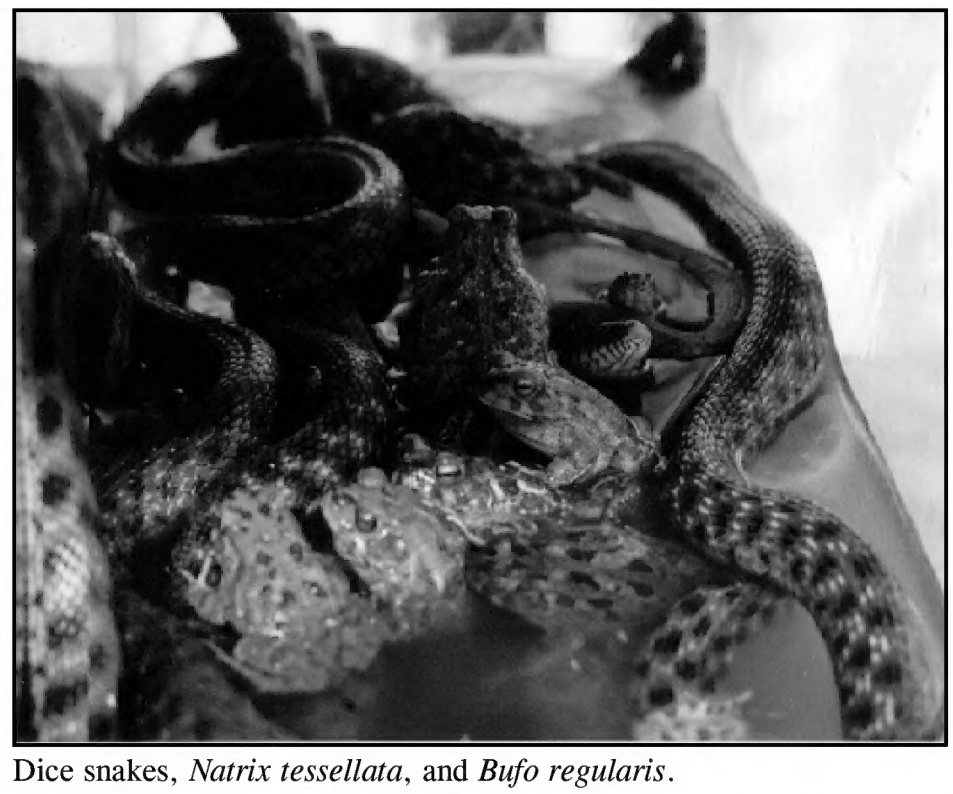


Desert monitors, *Varanus griseus*, common chameleons, *Chamaeleo chamaeleon*, and sandfish, *Scincus scincus*.

The terrible overcrowding, lack of food and water, and consequent stress is surely a boon to the bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases which are transmitted within and among various species under such conditions. One can only speculate on the infectious diseases some of the reptiles may contract which originate in the mammals and birds with which they are often kept. Such living bacteriological time bombs, the survivors of Sayyida Aisha, are picked over and again cramped into as small a container as possible for shipment to U.S. or European wildlife wholesalers.

All evidence supports the conclusion that the pet trade is responsible for the virtual extinction of *T. kleinmanni* within Egypt. Certainly, there has been habitat loss as well in places. However, the wildlife collectors themselves are often guilty both of depleting natural populations of reptiles and destroying their habitat in the process. Vendors described to me the digging up of burrows, tearing of shrubs and even uprooting small trees in their quest for valuable specimens, such as *U. aegyptius*. The pet trade thus goes hand in hand with habitat destruction in Egypt, where desert vegetation is even more crucial and sparse than in North American deserts. Reptiles overlooked by the rapacious collectors may thereby be faced with slow death from a suddenly inhospitable environment.

Not all animal importers in the United States and in Europe condone the practices described in this paper (Barnes and Dillon, 1995). Few of the proud owners of healthy dabb lizards or the very rare owners of the thriving Egyptian tortoises in this country would react other than with disgust in the face of these facts. However, those who have read this article and do not judge my observations invalid or exaggerated cannot ignore their part in perpetuating the misery at Sayyida Aisha if they have ever purchased "Egyptian" herps. The trend towards



Dice snakes, *Natrix tessellata*, and *Bufo regularis*.

captive breeding is very reassuring (Bartlett, 1988) and needs to be reinforced to the same degree that the protection of vulnerable wildlife species needs to be enforced. In November 1994, the Ninth Conference of the Parties to CITES in Florida unanimously voted to extend Appendix I protection to the Egyptian tortoise (Pritchard, 1995). The dwindling numbers of such tortoises being sold in this country represent the last legally exported members of their species. And not a moment too soon; there is no road back from extinction.

Desert monitors, *Varanus griseus*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Sherif and Mindy Baha el Din for their hospitality, assistance with identifying species offered for sale in Sayyida Aisha, and for help with this manuscript. James Buskirk was very insightful with his support, advice and help with the preparation of the final draft with this work. Akrum Bastawi was also helpful with his advice and initial help with the draft.

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Summers with Softshells

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The following account encapsulates a two-year field study of softshell turtles, performed in partial fulfillment of my master's thesis, and funded in part by a CHS Herpetological Grant (1993). I wish to thank CHS for its support during a critical time in my development as a herpetologist. The results presented herein are currently being submitted to the journal *Ecology* in a more quantitative format.

Those of us who dream herpetologically all have our favorite herping places, whether it involves research, collecting, or just enjoying and appreciating what nature displays. How marvelous it would be to go back in time to our favorite herping trip, to relive the experience again and again! Well, working on the Comite River in south Louisiana was as close as I could get to that experience. You see, I grew up on that river, though my mother would beg to differ, wondering when I would ever "grow up and stop playing in the woods!" The river was less than a half-mile from our house, and when the rainy days ran together the river came to our doorstep.

The Comite River is a shallow, sandy river with moderate current and low visibility. Generally, one can walk up any stretch of the river without getting wet much above the knees, at least in summer. The river is flanked by rich green woodland, and I can close my eyes and clearly see the willows, river birch and sycamores reaching out from the riverbanks on a still, hot summer day. Large, high sandbars are abundant at the site, facilitating nesting turtles, of which 11 species occur at the site.

I spent most of my teenage days on the river fishing, hunting, trapping, camping and herping. When we moved there I was 15, and the friends I made shared many adventures with me on the river, though none of them ever quite understood why I would suddenly disappear into briars after a racer, or reach under the riverbank and pull out a water snake, and force it to regurgitate a half digested catfish. How strange *they* were!

Of all the mysterious animals inhabiting the Comite and its banks, none captured my attention like the softshell turtle. For some time I figured softshells were quite scarce at the site, and only on occasion would I stumble upon one, usually in a shallow pool along a sandbar. I later learned that those few individuals were caught by surprise, and that in fact by walking one bend of the river one has walked past up to 100 softshells!

I began unlocking the mysteries of the softshells once I realized how to recognize where they were buried in the sand. I discovered, with the help of my newly acquired field guide (Conant, 1975), that there were two species cohabitating the site, the smooth softshell (*Apalone mutica*) and the spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifera*). And that both could outrun me on land, outswim me in water, and in a moment's notice disappear under the sand, making them difficult to acquire. However, since I spent the majority of my teenage days chasing turtles rather than girls, I learned to catch them.

In 1993, some years later, I was accepted into a masters program just 50 minutes away, at Southeastern Louisiana University. So after a hiatus of a few years, I was eager to return to the Comite to apply what I had learned about turtles, and how to conduct research on them. I was interested in their nesting ecology, an aspect I had little experience with as a youngster. So I proudly returned to the river, armed with enthusiasm and a meager knowledge of softshell turtle nests. To help alleviate my ignorance I recruited Mike Plummer onto my thesis committee. Mike was (and still is) the guru of softshell ecology, and I was delighted to have him in my corner.

I decided to launch a comparative nesting study between the two species, since both were abundant at the site (Doody, 1992), an apparently rare situation (M. Plummer, pers. com.). This would eliminate confounding factors that exist when comparing aspects of populations from different geographic areas. Quantified studies on nesting in softshells were limited to the work of Fitch and Plummer (1975) and Plummer (1976), and relatively few studies have examined the effect of nest site selection on nest survivorship in turtles in general. My objectives were to: (1) compare and contrast nest site selection between the two species; (2) monitor egg and nest survivorship of both species; and (3) examine the effect of nest site selection (if any) on egg and nest survivorship.

Early in the study, two problems reared their ugly heads. First, nest predation would certainly be high, and is usually greater than 70% in most turtle populations. How would I know which species each nest represented if all I had to go on were empty eggshells left over by nest predators? Secondly and relatedly, how could I tell which species each nest represented if the eggs hatched, given the fact that considerable overlap existed in crawl width, egg size and clutch size? I would have to cage the nests. Cages would restrain the hatchlings for species identification and protect against predation, while still allowing predation attempts (cages were under the sand).

I followed turtle crawls to the nests, which I found with the aid of a probe, after Plummer (pers. com.). I caged some 75 nests in two years, and felt good about the success of the technique. For a subset of nests, I counted eggs and measured nest depths. For each nest (more than 200) I recorded the aspect, slope, height above water, distance from water, distance from vegetation and crawl width. I monitored hatching success, and recorded incubation times of each nest. In the second year of the study (1994), a flood destroyed many nests and I quantified the mortality.

To summarize the results, both species selected nest sites in open sandy areas, high above water from mid-May to late July. Neither distance from vegetation nor height above water of nests differed between species. However, smooth softshells nested in steeper slopes, closer to water, and at more east-facing aspects than did spiny softshells. Distance from water appeared to be an artifact of slope, as the steepest slopes were near water. The difference in aspect between species is owed to the fact that smooth softshells preferred nesting on west sandbars (that is, sanbars on the west side of the river—facing east); no explanation is offered for this interesting finding.

Incubation period did not differ between species and averaged about 64 days. Clutch size averaged near 12 eggs for spiny softshells, compared to just 7 eggs for smooth softshells. Spiny softshell eggs were bigger than smooth softshell eggs. These differences were probably due to the fact that spiny softshells at the site (and at most sites) are bigger than smooth softshells, as evident by their crawl widths in this study.

About 82% of eggs in each nest hatched on average, and egg survivorship (defined as the number of successful eggs in a nest divided by the total number of eggs in the nest) did not differ between species. Nest survivorship was near 75%, and also did not differ between species. Surprisingly, predation was less than 1O%; predators included raccoons, fire ants, moles, dogs and a fox. Flooding destroyed 42% of all nests in 1994. The only nest site variable that affected nest survivorship in the study was height above water—lower nests were flooded in 1994. No nest site selection variables affected egg survivorship.

One of the more intriguing findings of the study was the annual variation in flood mortality. Had I only conducted the study for one year (1993), I would have concluded that flooding was not important to the success of the nest cohort. Conversely, 42% nest mortality in 1994 may have been an overestimate. Which year was typical, and what was the variation in flood mortality?

Because the U.S. Geological Survey has been recording river stages several times a day at a bridge in the study area for over 25 years, I could obtain a flood history for the site. And knowing (1) the effect of flooding on softshell turtle eggs (Plummer, 1976), (2) the temporal distribution of nests in the field, (3) the distribution of heights of nests in the field and (4) the relationship between river stage and water level in relation to actual nests in the field, I could estimate flood mortality for each year that river stage data were available. I did this for 14 years between 1981 and 1994. From this I calculated an average of 34% annual flood mortality, or one in three nests destroyed by floods annually, on average. In three of the 14 years no nests were predicted to have been destroyed by floods, while in two years nearly complete nest mortality due to flooding occurred. I also showed that adding years to the 14 years had little effect on the annual flood mortality, indicating that 14 years was enough to accurately estimate flood mortality in the population.

In summary, flood mortality was the major selective element affecting softshell nests in the population, apparently resulting in height above water of nests being the key nest site variable for nesting females. Smooth softshells preferred steeper slopes on west sandbars, but no consequences of those choices were found. Both low predation and the preference of smooth softshells to nest on west sandbars remain enigmatic.

Not included in this account are the many eventful experiences I had on the river in those two years. Looking back, I remind myself how fortunate I was to be able to explore the natural history of softshells in a place I frequented as a boy. The experience further convinced me that I had chosen the right career for myself, one that allows me to use my imagination to the fullest, but especially allows me to work with animals that fascinate me, in places that interest me. I will never forget those two summers on the Comite, and I hope that my future experiences (and those of others) are as rich and fruitful as those hot summer days with softshell turtles.

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HerPET-POURRI

by Ellin Beltz

Ugly trend developing?

• Bureau of Land Management workers discovered that 134 hatchling desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) had been stolen from the Clark County (Nevada) Desert Tortoise Conservation Center. "It's like someone broke into our house and stole our children," said a biologist working for the center. Workers speculate that the hatchlings were taken for the illegal international trade in rare reptiles. The theft is a violation of both the Federal Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act, which prohibits transportation across state lines of plants and animals removed illegally from the wild. Violations carry up to $100,000 and a year in jail per count, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In addition, the hatchlings were the data set for an ongoing nutrition study on the species. USFWS is offering a reward for information leading to conviction(s). [*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 23, 1996, from Bob Pierson]

• *The Caymanian Compass* carried an AP - Johannesburg, South Africa, story which read: "Half the babies of a rare species of tortoise in Madagascar, born at an isolated captive breeding site on the island, have been stolen. . . . Ampijoroa, 450 kilometers (280 miles) northwest of Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo, is the only captive breeding site of the ploughshare tortoise in the world. In ten years, 162 babies have been born there. . . ." [May 16, 1996, from Larry Reed] The following thoughts on the ploughshare situation were E-mailed to us by Bill Love, formerly of Glades Herp and more recently the proprietor of Blue Chameleon Ventures, a company that offers ecotours to Madagascar.

> My main thoughts when I first visited [Ampijoroa] in late '92 (just months before the infamous "German Incident") was that all those baby torts, about 64 at that point, were sitting ducks for some natural disaster like a disease, falling tree to liberate them, hungry predatory mongoose, etc. At the time I figured they were too remotely situated to worry about theft, but times they are a changin' and more and more tourists are becoming aware of their vulnerability out there in the boondocks. I suppose my tours aren't helping in that respect.
>
> Basically, they had all their eggs, and babes, in one basket (four little side-by-side pens, to be exact). The total protection concept, and thus high value, made them a target. I recall mentioning to Don Reid, the English overseer, that the sale of just a dozen of the offspring to the world's zoos could provide the revenues to fund the project into the next century (at local wages). Not that it was his decision to O.K. such a thing alone, but he wasn't interested anyway.
>
> The same situation—actually, not exactly the same, but similar situation—exists in the southeast at Berenty Reserve where they're holding hundreds of *Geochelone radiata* in huge pens that were returned from Réunion Island. The zoo in St. Denis, Réunion, shipped them 'home' after they accumulated too many from lost pets, 'donations' and confiscations from returning tourists from Madagascar. Now they're sitting on perpetual hold because no one wants to release them (they undoubtedly represent mixed populations). What a perfect group for Eaux et Forets (Malagasy Game & Fish Dept.) to discreetly sell off to raise money to fund other conservation projects! The money would be of a major amount in that beleaguered economy. They're not even displaying the animals—they have plenty of others in overly manicured pens for people to see, albeit with big white numbers painted on their carapaces. The Réunion group is km's away in a tucked-away naturalistic couple-acre pen that I arranged for my last tourist group to visit and photograph. . . .
>
> Keep up the excellent work. Don't ever let the whiners deter you away from telling it like it is. Your column in the CHS *Bulletin* is part of what makes it so good. The *Bulletin* is like *Consumer Reports* vs. the homogenized evening news. Sincerely, Bill

Busted!

Two Louisiana men were arrested and cited on "numerous violations" in connection with the theft and sale of two white alligators. They were charged with "possessing alligators in closed season, illegal possession of alligators, illegal possession of white alligators and illegal possession of stolen things . . . and selling alligators without a license," according to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The alligators were allegedly stolen from an alligator farm in a different parish. [April 12, 1996, from Theron Magers]

An "Accidental" Tourist?

• An officer from the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission showed up at an Indiana tourist's hotel room after the tourist called the FGFWFC to find out how to take home two alligators he'd just caught on a road. The man told FGFWFC that he already had two legal alligators that he'd bought from a pet shop in Hammond, Indiana. He said, "I'm a little bit embarrassed by the whole situation. Here I was, basically turning myself in." [Orlando *Sentinel*, January 26, 1996]

• But, the plot thickens. . . . Contributor Bill Burnett found the next part of the story in the same paper on February 3: "The caper of the alligators 'found' by an Indiana tourist last week turned into a felony case Friday when commission officers arrested a maintenance worker at the Gatorland zoo and charged him with selling the gators to the tourist for $150. . . . The tourist . . . denied buying the gators [from his home in Indiana]."

Shrimp vs turtles continues

• According to the *Chicago Tribune* the U.S. government has moved to ban importation of shrimp from countries that endanger sea turtles during the shrimp harvest. Most affected will be Thailand, India, China, Bangladesh and Honduras. "Shrimp may be imported only from countries whose boats use devices to prevent turtles from being caught, those with cold-water shrimping grounds that have no turtles or those where nets are retrieved manually," continued the report which mentioned that the U.S. imported $1.2 billion of shrimp "last year." [May 4, 1996, from Ray Boldt and Claus Sutor]

• Sixteen months of litigation in the dispute over sea turtle deaths off Texas and Louisiana shores ended in March after a federal judge threw out a lawsuit in Galveston in February. The U.S. Department of Commerce had been accused by four

environmental groups of failing to protect sea turtles. [Houma, LA *Courier*, March 25, 1996, from Ernie Liner; and HEART newsletter, from Carole Allen]

Frog deities

• *The Indian Express* reports "Berhampur: Villagers of Khajuria in Ganjam district worshipped a frog . . . to please the rain God Indra, as the dry spell continued to delay cultivation. . . . Farmers . . . firmly believed that there would be adequate rain if the rain god was pleased with this unique method of worship. A big live frog tied with a bamboo stick was carried by villagers who roamed in and around the village chanting couplets in honour of the wife of Lord Indra." [March 16, 1996, from Harry Andrews]

• In the southwestern U.S., similar rituals were being practiced by natives of Albuquerque, New Mexico. "Over at the Rio Grande Nature Center, they get a little punchy when the weather turns really dry. . . . 'We have bullfrogs out here,' jokes ranger Heidi Soergel. 'We make people pray to the deity by kissing the frogs.'" [*Alburquerque Journal*, May 27, 1996, from J. N. Stuart] It must have worked; it was raining the day the article was written.

• In south Florida the calls of mating frogs are keeping residents awake: "A series of torrential rain storms has triggered breeding season. . . . Wildlife officials said they have been swamped with calls from homeowners who can't sleep. . . . Wildlife experts said the noisy nights are here to stay until the end of the rainy season—in October." [Memphis, TN *Commercial Appeal*, June 14, 1996, from Bill Burnett]

• "On a dark and none too warm evening, the alder swamp rings with the triumphant chorus of a whole nation of spring peepers. The living, exultant noise sounds like a frenzy of tiny sleighbells, and through it one hears the musical trilling of the common toad, and the occasional jug-o-rum of a bullfrog. Heard nearby, the din from the swamp is almost deafening. It is a Dionysian ecstasy of night and spring, a shouting and a rejoicing out of puddles and streams, a festival of belief in sheer animal existence." [from *Northern Farm* by Henry Beston, c. 1950 Down East Books, from Valerie DuPrez]

In a century

Mark Twain wrote about red-legged frogs which then numbered in the hundreds of thousands in the classic story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." Every year they have a jumping frog contest. This year, the winner only had three legs. And it wasn't a red-legged frog. That species has declined too far and has just been protected under the Endangered Species Act—the first species listed after a year-long moratorium. Red-legged frogs were exploited as a food source when California was first settled. Their initial decline prompted introduction of non-native bullfrogs to continue the frog harvest. [*Commercial Appeal*, May 21, 1996, from Bill Burnett and *New York Times*, from Karen Furnweger]

In a third of a century

• The co-owner of a Louisiana turtle export company reacted to the box turtle export ban: "The box turtles have been a renewable resource in the state of Louisiana since the reptile and amphibian industry first appeared which was probably 30 or so years ago. As a business person, because of my personal, hands-on dealing with the reptiles and amphibians collected from the state of Louisiana . . . our main interest is to see to it that the reptile and amphibian industry in Louisiana is always a renewable resource, similar to the shrimp, the fish, the crab and the oysters." [Baton Rouge, LA *Sunday Advocate*, March 24, 1996, from Ernie Liner]

• Harold A. Dundee, chairman of the Louisiana Reptile and Amphibian Task Force and co-author of *The Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana*, is said to be glad the exports are being prohibited. His panel had recommended some box turtles could be taken, but not 10,000 as the turtle export industry had wanted. [Houma, LA *The Courier*, March 24, 1996]

Wisconsin limits proposed

Turtle trappers in Wisconsin approached that state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) asking for regulation on to limit how many soft-shelled turtles may be taken by whom and when. The problem seems to be that "a booming European market for soft-shelled turtles accounts for much of the increase in trapping. . . . Many trappers in Wisconsin sell to a buyer in Iowa who sells both live turtles and dressed turtle meat to European markets. . . . Some out-of-state trappers capitalizing on Wisconsin's lack of regulation, are taking up to 300 pounds a day of soft-shelled turtles from the Mississippi and other rivers." At present, only ornate box turtles are protected by state laws. A season to protect breeding and nesting as well as a size limit and a bag limit have been put forward for comment. [Wisconsin *State Journal*, May 22, 1996, from Dreux Watermolen]

Turtle rustling in Florida

A Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission official speculated that softshell turtle collectors are shipping their catch to Japan where "they're a delicacy, I think they're considered an aphrodisiac," according to a report in the Ft. Pierce *Tribune*. Trotlines and nets have been left in lakes overnight, and lakefront owners report seeing animals in pickup trucks and car trunks. About the only law that could be used to stop the trappers is trespassing, said the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office since the turtles are not protected. No statistics are kept on numbers of animals shipped, unless they're on the endangered species list of the state from which they were sent. [May 3, 1996, from Allen Salzberg]

Salamander round-up

The drought in Texas has resulted in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service beginning to collect fountain darters and San Marcos salamanders from San Marcos and Comal Springs. Captives will be housed in tanks at the San Marcos National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center in the hopes of saving the species if the continuing drought results in a total loss of natural habitat when the springs dry up. The two springs are the largest outlets of the Edwards Aquifer which provides drinking water to 1.5 million people and farm irrigation water in six counties. The spring levels are going down faster than

expected, according to water district officials. [*Austin-American Statesman*, May 24, 1996, from William B. Montgomery]

Art imitates life

For just $29.99 plus $3.95 shipping and handling, you too can get a 12″ by 10″ green giant plastic frog that "loudly 'ribbets' whenever anyone crosses his path" because it has a motion sensor. I got the article on this from super-clipper Bob Pierson from the *Las Vegas Sun* [January 12, 1996], but I've actually *seen* one of these at the Geneva, Illinois, Ace Hardware and it's just as big, tacky, and silly as you could imagine from the story. Just the thing for the tasteful suburban home built on former amphibian habitat, now polluted with septic fields and lawn chemicals—a plastic frog!

Cruelty definitions changing

- A woman in Denver, Colorado, was charged with animal cruelty, punishable with a $999 fine and up to a year in jail for not taking her pet box turtle to the vet for a $150 operation the woman said she couldn't afford. The charge was thrown out on a technicality. [Leesburg, FL *Daily Commercial*, May 8, 1996, from Bill Burnett]

- A case in West Chester, Pennsylvania, reports on a phenomenon known as "collecting" where what starts with one or two animals can lead to dozens or even hundreds of animals being kept by a single individual or a family. An animal control officer said that the owners may have more pets than they can reasonably care for. Then, some do not receive adequate food, water, sanitation, or veterinary care and her agency has to intervene. [*The Sun*, March 31, 1996, from Mark Witwer]

Ten feet tall and bulletproof, too

A Texas man bitten by a coral snake allegedly killed the snake and used its skin to make the tourniquet widely cited for saving his life from its deadly "poison." The 40-year-old was walking by the side of U.S. 281 when he reached into a clump of grass and was bitten. A passer-by drove the man to Edinburg Hospital where officials said he should make a full recovery. [May 11, 1996 *Albuquerque Journal* from J. N. Stuart; *Alexandria Daily Towntalk*, May 12, 1996, from Theron Magers]

Are they breeding?

Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission officers responded to a call and found a dead 9′9″ reticulated python in a creek near Leesburg, Florida. The Orlando *Sentinel* reports: "A minivan full of tourists risked high-speed traffic to snap pictures of the snake. One truck driver yelled out his window, asking the wildlife officers how large the snake was. [The officer] said people with exotic pets should never release them into the wild." The animal was reported to be from 8 to 10 years old and weighed 65 pounds. Some exotic species have colonized south Florida, but it is not known if pythons are reproducing in the wild. [January 31, 1996, from Bill Burnett]

International conference in Sri Lanka

The International Conference on the Biology and Conservation of the South Asian Amphibians and Reptiles will be held August 1–5, at the University of Peradeniya in Kandy, Sri Lanka. If any CHS member makes it there, I'd be happy to hear how it was. Speakers include Carl Gans, Indraneil Das, Rom Whitaker, M. S. Khan, P. C. H. Pritchard, Anselm de Silva and other prominent herpetologists.

Chicago Turtle Club

The active turtle interest group within the CHS has just published their periodical *Amblings* with a request for members interested in participating in their group or subscribing to the journal to contact Lisa Koester, 6121 N. Fairfield Avenue, Chicago, IL 60659. Incidentally, Lisa and Richard are expecting their first (human) hatchling in September. Lisa writes: "Newsletter submissions, as always, will be cheerfully accepted—but appreciated more than ever then!!"

Thanks to everyone who contributed this month and to Steve Ragsdale, Mark Witwer, Ernie Liner, David Blatchford, J. N. Stuart, Dee Fick, Denise and Frank Andreotti, E. A. Zorn, Michael Wood, and Ardis Allen who sent stuff I enjoyed but didn't summarize. You can contribute, too. Send clippings with date/publication slug firmly attached by tape and with your name to: Ellin Beltz, 1647 N. Clybourn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614-5507.

Herpetology 1996

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editors assume full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

PROLONGED EGG RETENTION IN CHICKEN TURTLES

K. A. Buhlmann et al. [1995, Herpetologica 51(4):457-462] found that *Deirochelys reticularia* possesses a reproductive strategy unique among North American turtles by exhibiting a bimodal autumn and spring nesting pattern in the northern part of its range. Between 1976 and 1994, 153 X-radiographs were taken of 50 females of *Deirochelys reticularia* to detect the presence of calcified eggs. Thirteen gravid females were X-radiographed in both autumn and the following spring. Of these, eight retained the same set of calcified eggs and five contained a different clutch. The authors did not observe spring to autumn retention of eggs. Analysis of X-radiographs from *Kinosternon subrubrum* and *Trachemys scripta* indicated much shorter retention times that spanned a few weeks at most within a summer nesting season. Egg retention may represent an adaptation specific to *Deirochelys* that enables postponement of nesting if conditions are unsuitable.

RINGNECKS SNIFF OUT SALAMANDER TAILS

D. L. Lancaster and S. E. Wise [1996, Herpetologica 52(1): 98-108] note that the ability of a predator to detect and identify substrate odors of prey can enhance its foraging success. Likewise, the production (or lack of production) of odors by prey may be used as a defense against predation. The ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*) detects substrate odors originating from its prey, a territorial salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*) capable of autotomizing its tail as an antipredator defense mechanism. The authors performed experiments to determine: (1) if substances from the bodies and tails of these salamanders are equally attractive to the snakes; and (2) whether individuals of *D. punctatus* respond similarly to substrate odors of "tailed" (tails mostly intact) and "tailless" (tail-autotomized) *P. cinereus*. The snakes showed an increase in the number of tongue flicks directed toward swabs containing substances from the ventral surface of the tail of *P. cinereus* relative to the ventral surface of the body. In addition, adults of *D. punctatus* spent a greater amount of time on the side of a chamber with substrate odors from tailed residents versus a control (substrate odors of *Drosophila virilis*), but they did not show a difference in behavior in the presence of substrate odors from tailless residents as compared to *D. virilis*. Thus, the expendable tail of *P. cinereus* is more attractive to *D. punctatus* than the body, possibly enhancing the chance of survival of these salamanders during predatory encounters.

A NEW GUYANAN HYLID

W. E. Duellman and M. Yoshpa [1996, Herpetologica 52(2): 275-281] name a new species, *Tepuihyla talbergae*, from the eastern edge of the Guiana Shield in Guyana. The new species extends the range of the genus eastward to Guyana and to a lower elevation than previously known.

MEASURING SNAKE ACTIVITY PATTERNS

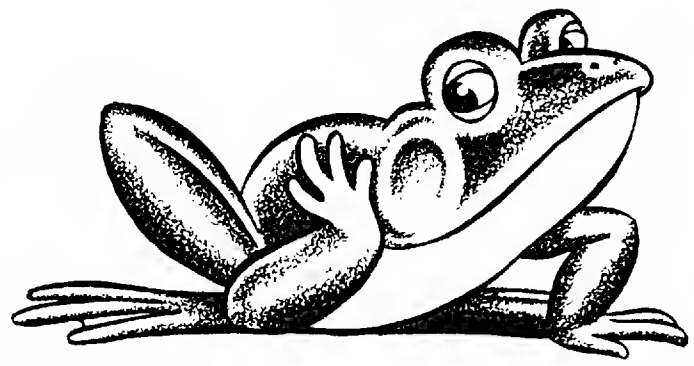
M. J. Whiting et al. [1996, Amphibia–Reptilia 17(1):47-54] studied activity patterns for two populations of the Concho water snake (*Nerodia harteri paucimaculata*) in a large lake system in central Texas, as well as a river population. Trap data suggested different activity patterns for the two geographically proximate lake populations. Testing of the trap data using the program CAPTURE revealed differences in catchability rather than activity cycles. Based on these results, the apparent activity pattern for one of the lake sites was considered erroneous. The differences in catchability were ascribed to habitat differences. It is suggested that future studies should incorporate a test of equal catchability when making interpopulational comparisons.

HEADSTARTING AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR LONG-LIVED TURTLES

S. S. Heppell et al. [1996, Ecological Applications 6(2):556-565] note that most turtle species suffer high mortality in their first year, have a long juvenile period and can live for decades once they reach adulthood. Conservationists have implemented a number of recovery plans for threatened turtle populations, including experimental "headstart" programs. Headstarting involves the captive rearing of hatchlings from eggs collected in the wild. The hatchlings are held for several months to help them avoid high mortality in their first year. It is hoped that these turtles survive and grow like wild turtles after release. The purpose of this study was to evaluate headstarting as a management tool for threatened turtle populations. The authors critically examined the population-level effects of headstarting with a series of deterministic matrix models for yellow mud turtles (*Kinosternon flavescens*), a "non-threatened," well-studied species, and endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys kempi*). They show that management efforts focused exclusively on improving survival in the first year of life are unlikely to be effective for long-lived species such as turtles. Population projections for both turtles predict that headstarting can augment increasing populations when adult survival is returned to or maintained at high levels, provided that headstarted juveniles are as vigorous as wild turtles. However, when subadult and adult survival are reduced, headstarting cannot compensate for losses in later stages. Proportional sensitivity (elasticity) analyses of stage-based matrix models indicated that annual survival rates for subadult and adult turtles are most critical; small decreases in the survival of older turtles can quickly overcome any potential benefits of headstarting. In general, the biological benefits of headstarting programs may be overestimated for turtles, and careful examination of stage-specific mortality sources, demography and life history can provide a guide toward more effective management strategies.

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 31(7):138-139, 1996

The Tympanum



Dear CHS Members and Board of Directors:

I am a CHS member, and serve as Reptile and Amphibian research and management coordinator for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. My recent activities have included dealing with the Louisiana box turtle export issue. A great deal of scientific literature, data, letters and comments regarding box turtles has crossed my desk in the past year, and I have been involved in analyzing data, conducting field work and coordinating research on box turtles with the USFWS. I am also involved with the Louisiana Reptile & Amphibian Task Force, and with monitoring reptile dealer operations within the state.

Nearly every letter and commentary I have read regarding the harvest of Louisiana box turtles has been written by individuals with no firsthand knowledge of the issues relating to the Louisiana situation. Many of the comments are secondhand and seem to have been "parroted" from action alerts, etc. Thus, a great deal of misinformation has made its way into print. I read Ms Horwich's letter to the USFWS, published in the April issue of BCHS, and wish to make the following comments.

The LRATF is legislated to comprise 16 members, including five amphibian and reptile dealers and one captive breeder. The remaining ten members consist of six doctoral-level biologists (including three herpetologists, one aquaculturists, one educator and one veterinarian), three masters-level biologists (two of whom are herpetologists) and one turtle expert representing the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. Thus, the LRATF is actually weighted towards professional, non-commercial biologists rather than commercial interests. Originally four of the academic members were appointed solely in an advisory capacity. However, the Task Force has requested the State Legislature to allow these individuals voting privileges. It is noteworthy that in the five-year existence of the Task Force the non-voting members have always been given a courtesy vote, and that no issue has passed without the approval of these "non-voting" members. It should also be noted that the herpetologist who resigned did so because of increased professional duties, not because of differences of opinion.

The Task Force was developed through the combined efforts of the LDWF and a group of animal dealers who took an interest in conserving amphibian and reptile resources for sustainable use. These dealers brought a number of critical issues to the attention of the LDWF regarding trapping methods, recommended size limits for some species, and provided data on the extent of harvests that might otherwise have gone unrealized. To state that the dealers operate in opposition to the interests of wildlife populations is presumptuous and incorrect.

The statements regarding inhumane trapping and shipping practices for box turtles are also incorrect. In Louisiana box turtles are chiefly collected during late winter and spring by licensed collectors. During March and April several hundred box turtles may be purchased by a dealer every week. Harvested turtles are maintained in outdoor enclosures containing one or more pools of water and shelters. The turtles are usually shipped within a week of capture, and those being exported reach their destination within 36 hours. If shipping is delayed the turtles are fed produce and chopped meat. They are shipped in waxed, reinforced cardboard boxes, with 10–15 turtles per box. The boxes are shallow enough to prevent stacking of the turtles, and are strong enough to support a man's weight. European turtle buyers have reported little or no turtle mortality when turtles are shipped by this method. Since dealer/buyer relations are based upon receipt of healthy, attractive animals, a great deal of care is given to turtle maintenance and shipping procedures. Box turtles that are exported from the U.S. leave under surveillance of the USFWS and/or airline authorities. Prior to federal (CITES) restrictions, the turtles were harvested and shipped rapidly, and any delays in this process resulted in the burden of the dealers to provide added care to the turtles such as food and vitamin supplements. Louisiana reptile dealers operate under a monitored licensing system by the LDWF. I know each of them personally, and am familiar enough with their operations to assure the CHS that box turtles are collected, housed and shipped in a humane manner.

The USFWS has partially funded a study to analyze *Terrapene Carolina* in both harvested and protected populations in southern Louisiana. The following data are initial results gathered to date, and were obtained during winter/spring 1996. Gulf coast box turtles were studied in a control site of bottomland hardwoods in southern Louisiana, where mark and recapture studies indicate a density of 5.6 adults/acre. Fifteen percent of the turtles encountered were "size-class" juveniles, and growth slowed markedly at about 10-12 years according to growth rings. Aside from these novel data, only anecdotal data are available for this subspecies in Louisiana. The gulf coast box turtle is more aquatic than other subspecies of *T. carolina*, and published data indicate that it is more fecund.

It appeared that none of the turtle biologists responding to the USFWS export proposal had any experience with Louisiana box turtle populations. It is doubtful that data based on other subspecies of *T. carolina*, or from populations in northern climates and habitats, can be unequivocally applied to *T. c. major*. Observations by myself and other Louisiana biologists indicate that *T. c. major* is abundant, and remains common in areas that have been harvested for box turtles. The USFWS/LDWF study should provide data on the demography of protected vs. harvested populations as well as basic biological data on *T. c. major*. Such data are necessary to evaluate the effects of commercial harvest on Louisiana box turtles. Any assistance with this project is welcome, especially from individuals with data regarding population biology of box turtles in Louisi-

ana, and I look forward to hearing from you. Sincerely, **Jeff Boundy, Senior Field Biologist, Fur & Refuge Division, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898. Phone: (504) 765-2815; FAX: (504) 765-2818.**

In response to Jeff Boundy's correspondence regarding the issue of the possible export of as many as 10,000 wild-caught American box turtles annually from Louisiana, I can only say that he is correct. I am guilty of obtaining all my information from one source: the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society. Regular readers of the *Bulletin* will recall that in 1994, Carole Allen of H.E.A.R.T. asked that I write a letter to Representative Studds supporting the continuation of the NMFS Kemp's ridley headstart program, which program was supported in large measure by funds raised by H.E.A.R.T. Before mailing that letter, I did solicit opposing viewpoints, and was therefore able to form a balanced argument. My letter encouraged the continuation of the headstart program, but with certain modifications, and only if it would not be used as an excuse to relax TED (turtle excluder device) regulations and enforcement.

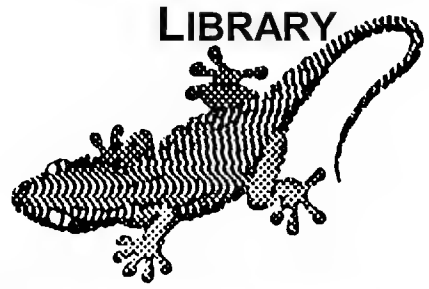
In the case of the Louisiana box turtles, I did not have time to research the issue before the deadline. I wrote the letter based on information received from the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society, but also based on everything I've ever read, heard, observed and learned about the natural history of turtles, their reproductive cycles and rates of survival. Despite any details I may have "parroted" that may have been inaccurate, I continue to believe that an annual predation of 10,000 healthy adult members of the breeding pool of almost any population of turtles or tortoises would have disastrous consequences to that population's continued survival. Box turtles weren't added to CITES Appendix II because they're cute. They were added because their continued survival is in jeopardy. In this country, and around the world, we humans have an ugly history of exploiting species of animals and plants to the brink of extinction, and only then attempting heroic efforts to rescue them. If, in fact, box turtles are more numerous in Louisiana than we think, how much sense does it make to prey on them until they're gone? We've all seen the film, shot in the 1940s, of thousands of Kemp's ridleys nesting on the beach at Rancho Nuevo. Seeing all those turtles, no one would have believed that such a large population could be decimated so easily. And yet now, only 50 years later, the continued survival of all sea turtles, and Kemp's ridley in particular, is in grave doubt. Do we really want to push American box turtles down that same slippery slope to extinction?

Regarding the humane shipping issue, I can only say I sure wouldn't want any of the box turtles in my care (all captive born and bred, I might add) packed 10 or 15 to a box. I don't care if the box is so strong, elephants can stand on it. I find it difficult to imagine that the turtles arrive at their destination with toes, tails, feet and even eyes still attached. According to Mr. Boundy, if shipping is delayed, the turtles are fed "produce and chopped meat." Again, I wouldn't want any of my turtles eating chopped meat. It may be full of potentially harmful organisms, and it's way too fatty. Wild turtles don't generally stop in at their local Winn Dixie for a pound of chopped meat. They eat worms, insects, berries and other plants.

When all is said and done, whatever inaccurate information I may have accidentally passed along, I maintain that all species of turtles have evolved such that survival of healthy adults is crucial to the continuation of the species. I cannot imagine that an annual predation of as many as 10,000 turtles from the wild would not cause serious, if not irreparable damage to any population of turtles.
Jill Horwich, 1618 W. Cornelia Avenue, Chicago IL 60657.

Editor's note: Watch the Tympanum next month for several more responses to Mr. Boundy's letter.

CHICAGO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY



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Advertisements

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Attention: A database (studbook) for Egyptian tortoises (*Testudo kleinmanni*) is available to persons who currently own Egyptian tortoises and are interested in long-term captive breeding of the species. The purpose of this studbook is to keep a large diverse gene pool of captive tortoises to avoid long-term problems associated with inbreeding. There is no charge for this service. Interested persons should call Dan at (303) 347-0394 (evenings only please) or fax (303) 347-1172 (24-hour). [CO]

For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 6115 SW 137th Avenue, Archer FL 32618, (904) 495-9024.

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For sale: from Bayou Rodents, excellent quality feeder mice and rats. Every size available. Pinks starting at $20/100. Orders are shipped by overnight service Monday thru Thursday. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. For more info, contact Rhonda or Peggy, (800) 722-6102.

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For Sale: **Reptile D-lights.** Our 8% is the first and only fluorescent light bulb that duplicates the UV-B output of the sun while having an excellent color rendition (CRI 91). Let your reptile make *exactly* the right amount of vitamin D. Stop under- or overdosing with all those powders. A must-have for iguanas, uromastyx, bearded dragons and all diurnal basking lizards. Get yours now! Available in 18″, 24″, 36″, 48″. $34.95 each plus shipping. In California please add 7.75% sales tax. Dealer inquiries invited. Scott Solar (909) 627-3274; 9 – 9 Pacific Time or; Reptek@aol.com anytime. For Animal Use Only.

For sale: reptile cage disinfectant and deodorant. Kills many types of infectious disease detrimental to herps. $3.91 for 2 oz (makes 1 gallon). Wholesale and quantity prices available. Make checks payable to Bengal Pets, Inc., 1088 Chapman Road, Jesup GA 31545, (912) 530-6384.

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For sale: used mouse-breeding racks, 36 trays per rack, complete with water bottles, trays and fresh breeding stock, $360 per rack. Very space efficient (17″ × 55″ × 80″h). Discounts available on multiple racks. MC/VISA accepted. The Gourmet Rodent, (904) 495-9024.

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For sale: **Collectors' items**. *Reptile and Amphibian Magazine*, November 1989 to December 1994, includes extra issues, all in mint condition, best offer; *Vivarium*, Vol. 1, #1 thru Vol. 3, #6, all mint condition, b.o.; *Captive Breeding*, Vol. 1, #1 thru Vol. 3, #2, all in mint condition, b.o.; *Living Amphibians of the World* by D. Cochran, mint, w/ dust jacket, out of print, b.o. Chris, (616) 772-4627.

For sale: amphibian and reptile books. New, out of print and rare, over 4500 listed. My new 1996 96-page general natural history book list, which includes herpetological books as well, is also available. Send $2 for postage, refundable with any purchase, to: Herpetological Search Service & Exchange, 117 E. Santa Barbara Road, Lindenhurst NY 11757.

For sale: "Let's Give Turtles a Brake" bumper stickers. Dramatic drawing of box turtle vs. tire printed in black and orange. plus New York Turtle and Tortoise Society telephone number. Send SASE and check for $2, made out to NYTTS, to Allen Salzberg, 67-87 Booth Street - 5B, Forest Hills NY 11375-3124.

For sale: 8″ leopard tortoises, best offer. Free to good home, 4″ Indonesian box turtle. Don, (708) 293-4806.

For sale: Large sell-off of turtles. Red-cheeked mud turtles (*Kinosternon scorpioides cruentatum*), all females, $80 each; striped-neck turtles (*Ocadia sinensis*), juveniles $25, female $20; Kwangtung River turtles (*Chinemys kwangtungensis*), $150/pair; mata mata turtles (*Chelus fimbriatus*), adult pair $1300, subadults $350 each; female four-eyed turtles (*Sacalia bealei*), $30 each; keeled box turtles (*Pyxidea mouhotii*), $25 each; yellow box turtles (*Cuora flavomarginata*), $45 each; Pan's box turtle (*Cuora pani*), females, $250 each; female Vietnamese wood turtle (*Geoemyda spengleri*), $75; spiny turtles (*Heosemys spinosa*), $80 each; one pair of white-lipped mud turtles (*Kinosternon leucostomum*), $50; female spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), $75 [permit required in Illinois and many other eastern and midwestern states]; European pond turtles (*Emys orbicularis*), $125/pair; black-knobbed map turtles (*G. nigrinoda*), $125/pair; adult male diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*), $50; striped mud turtle (*Kinosternon baurii*); alligator snapping turtles, subadults, light color phase, may be a pair, female 5″, male 4″, not sold where protected, $125/pair; Chinese three-keeled pond turtle (*Chinemys reevesii*), subadults, male and female, $80/pair; adult pair of Malayan box turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*), $45; juvenile female loggerhead musk turtles (*Sternotherus minor*), $15 each; adult male pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*), $150; adult pair of New Guinea snapping turtles (*Elseya novaeguineae*), $80; two subadult female red-bellied shortneck turtles (*Emydura subglobosa*), $60 each; two adult female Egyptian tortoises (*Testudo kleinmanni*), $60 each. Also, Rubbermaid water troughs, 25-gallon $20, 50-gallon $30. Assorted used aquariums from 10-gallon to 120-gallon and assorted metal stands, check for price. Bill Schiefen, (414) 628-0066. [WI]

For sale: Available now: baby–young Aldabra tortoises, 2½–10″, absolute gems! Also, adult breeder Savu pythons, 2+-year captives and high-yellow striped ball pythons, beauties! Inquire. Also expected in 1996: Pythons—womas, blackheads, rings, jungle carpets, bloods, Children's and green trees. Boas—Hogg Islands, Madagascar trees, Brazilian rainbows, Bolivian and Brazilian redtails, emerald trees, Dumeril's and sand boas. Tortoises: Aldabras, redfoots, marginateds, leopards and Hermann's. Lizards—leucistic leopard geckos. If you're not already on my mailing list, please send a one-time fee of $3 for 1996 list, all future lists and color photos. Hours: 9 A.M. – 6 P. M., Mon–Fri; Sat 9 A.M. – Noon Eastern Time. Dick Goergen, P.O. Box 225, Alden NY 14004, (716) 681-4518.

Advertisements (cont'd)

For sale: **redfoot tortoises**, yearlings, $175, 2-year-olds, $200. Marc, (708) 597-6172.

For sale: alligator snapping turtles [no-cost permit required for possession in IL], c.b. '95, 10 left, $50, one c.b. '92, 4″, and one 7″, $100 each, three 8–10″, $150 each. (816) 283-3639. [MO]

For sale: **iguana**—healthy and large (14″ body, not including 3′ tail), good coloring, eats like a pig, includes large, custom-built habitat, trac lighting and Vita-lite, $200. (708) 897-3697 leave message if no answer.

For sale: c.b. 2-month-old veiled chameleons, $50 each; c.b. spiny-tailed iguanas, $25 each. Tom Taylor, (602) 967-6265. [AZ]

For sale: one male and one female bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*), male is 3 years old, female is 1½ years old, proven breeders, nice patterns and colors, $325/pair; one male and one female satanic leaf-tail geckos (*Uroplatus phantasticus*), very nice colors, proven breeders, $250/pair, one extra male, excellent shape, $100. Also, c.b. geckos—African flat geckos (*Afroedura* sp.), established juveniles, $40 each; Australian velvet geckos (*Oedura castelnaui* and *Oedura monilis*), $75 each; giant day geckos, (*Phelsuma madagascariensis grandis*), $25 each; ornate day geckos (*P. ornata*), $35 each. Philip Tremper, P.O. Box 264, Clintonville WI 54929, (715) 823-5873.

For sale: Diamonds in the Desert! Desert Oasis Reptiles is reducing our collection due to new home and new family member. The following top quality animals are for sale: one male and two female adult inland bearded dragons, *Pogona vitticeps*, regular phase, c.b.'94, proven breeders, still have clutches to lay this season! All different bloodlines, chunkers, $550/group; one male and two female subadult inland bearded dragons, *P. vitticeps*, RED PHASE! c.b. '95, beauties, three different blood lines, should lay this year. Great investment, immediate return, $600/group. Will consider trade for tortoises or rosy boas. Call Mike at (520) 531-0215, leave message. [AZ]

For sale: LEOPARD GECKOS, Hi-Yellow babies, from beautiful zoo-born stock, must pick up, $18 each, includes detailed care sheet. Rob Carmichael, (847) 615-4388 leave message, or e-mail at <RCarmic416@aol.com>.

For sale: captive-bred Dumeril's monitors, *Varanus dumerilii*, $330 (10% discount to herp society members, $297). Unrelated bloodlines hatched January '96 and May '96. Mike, (770) 987-3933. [GA]

For sale: Beautiful, captive-born babies. Bearded dragons, many unique color morphs, $35–125; veiled chameleons, $35–60; panther chameleons, $60–75; leopard geckos, $20–30; northern bluetongue skinks, call for price. Also expecting frilled lizard babies. Call for prices as well as other available herps. Conveniently located in Chicagoland area. We ship nationwide. **Midwest Reptile Farm**, (708) 539-7025.

For sale: captive-bred snakes, lizards, tortoises and amphibians. Prospective births and hatchlings include: leopard geckos, carpet chameleons, Jackson's chameleons, African spurred tortoises, rat snakes, milksnakes, kingsnakes, western hognose snakes (permit required in Illinois), northern and black pines, Colombian boas, Brazilian rainbow boas and Macklot's pythons. Send SASE for current list or call. R. L. Ball, Rt. 1 Box 170, Carthage TX 75633, (903) 693-3379.

For sale: by early July, some very unique hatchling northern pine snakes (*Pituophis m. melanoleucus*). The father is a high-contrast black & white Virginia animal with larger, fewer saddles than the average northern pine; the mother is the same Alabama female with the ovoid saddles that bred with the "bow-tie" snake last year. Those who purchased those hatchlings report that they grew into high-contrast black & white animals, and are extremely pleased with them. The same can be expected from this year's group as well. A precious few are available at the reasonable price of $90/pair (no single animals). Note: as many people learned this season (the hard way), my animals have a tendency to sell out very quickly, so the time to order is now. Bart Bruno, (203) 773-9257. [CT]

For sale: c.b. hatchling snakes. Potosí king (*Lampropeltis m. mexicana*), $90; Sinaloan milk, $60; Baird's rat, $30; albino black rat, $35. Henry Cohen, 24 St. John's Place, Buffalo NY 14201, (716) 881-6724.

For sale: 1996 prospective hatchlings. Trans-Pecos ratsnakes, $35 each; Baird's ratsnakes, $25 each; Mexican hognose, $35 each [permit needed in Illinois]; western hognose, $25 each [permit needed in Illinois]; prairie kings, $25 each; California kings, $25 each; greybands, various locations, $100 and up; *ruthveni*, $75 each; Durango mountain kings, $100 each; Mexican black kings, $40 each; Mexican milksnakes, $50 each; Pueblans, $50 each; red milks, $35 each; albino speckled kings, $50 each; *thayeri*, $100 each; Arizona mountain kings, $125 each; rosy boas (*roseofusca*), $75 each. Prices subject to change. Quantity discounts. Steve Mitchener, 2928 Kerry Lane, Oklahoma City OK 73120, (405) 748-6566 after 6 P.M. Central Time.

For sale: tricolors, albinos and a few secret projects. Send SASE for free price list. Robert Applegate, P.O. Box 338, Campo CA 91906, (619) 478-5123. Also, free husbandry consultation by phone, as a service to the herp community.

For sale: Mexican rosy boa pair, c.b. '93, $250; female northern pine snake, c.b. '93, nice b&w contrast, $50; male desert phase California kingsnake, c.b. '93, $40. All snakes in excellent condition. (708) 361-5835.

For sale: 7′ female boa constrictor, 5½ years old, $100 or best offer. Mike Olson, (847) 215-2479 evenings.

For sale: Hog Island boas, c.b. 5/96, $200–275 each, yearling "keeper select holdbacks," $325 each; Brazilian rainbow boas, c.b. 4/96 from orange-red adults, females only, $225; Colombian rainbow boas, c.b. 4/96, males $65, females $85; c.b. '96 albino speckled kings, $40; albino and hetero corns, $20; hetero for albino bulls, $40. Possible delivery to Chicago area. Mark Wendling, (319) 857-4787. [IA]

For sale: two female c.b. '94 rough-scaled sand boas, two male and two female c.b. '95 rough-scaled sand boas, group (2.4) $500. Mike Wood, 1025 Shady Lane, Warsaw IN 46580, (219) 269-7664.

For sale: **Chondros, chondros, chondros!** 1996 is the year of the chondro! Eugene and Trooper are ready to send your own personal choice green tree python from the world's largest and most genetically diversified collection of green tree pythons, second to none. Do not miss this opportunity to experience the privilege of raising your own c.b.b. baby chondro. All babies will have shed two or more times, guaranteed feeding on their own. Data cards, genealogy charts and scientific reprints, all you need to ensure your many years of joy with the finest chondros in the world. Also available, 1- to 2-year-old breeder selects from numerous existing genetic colonies. Invest in the very best! Other pythons and boas available. Call for more info, Ophiological Services, (352) 495-3075 or fax (352) 495-2952.

For sale: captive-bred snakes. Blood pythons, Burmese pythons, Kenyan sand boas, black rat snakes, bull snakes. Will deliver in Chicago metro area or ship from O'Hare Airport. Joan Moore, (312) 528-4631.

For sale: Send SASE to CRC, P.O. Box 0731, Las Vegas NV 89125-0731 for brochures and list of species available. Limited bookings available for guided tours of herpetological collection sites in Nevada. Call/fax (702) 471-0240. Look for our ad on the Internet, <http://www.accessnv.comm/crc>.

Free to good home: two butterfly agamas. Jim, (708) 425-1152.

Pet-sitting service: Complete in-home pet and plant care, specializing in reptiles and other unique pets. Dogs and cats welcome with open arms, midday dog walking. Experienced and dependable service by devoted animal lovers, serving Chicago and suburbs, reasonable prices, fully insured and bonded. Ask about our habitat consultation and custom-made cages. Exotics & More, (312) 728-5457 or page us at (708) 750-3688.

Advertisements (cont'd)

Repto-rama: Live educational presentation of local herps and herps of the eastern United States for parties, scout groups, nature centers etc. Dave, (847) 679-1530.

Software: **TRACS**™ record keeping and breeding software for IBM and compatibles. TRACS™ Professional, a full system, $129; TRACS™ *Lite*, for the hobbyist, just $39.95. Add $5 s&h, $10 outside U.S. Send for a working demo for $10 (cost may be applied toward purchase). Or download demo free via Internet at <http://www.herp.com/tracs/>. Send check or money order to Leapin' Lizards, 23852 Pacific Coast Highway, #375, Malibu CA 90265.

Tours: Join CHS member Henry Cohen and herpetologist/author Dr. William Lamar on an Amazon riverboat for the herp (and/or birding, fishing etc.) adventure of a lifetime. Eight-day trip departs Miami November 2, 1996. Longer extensions available. Very limited space available. Call Henry Cohen at (716) 881-6724 or **Greentracks** at (800) 9-MONKEY.

Tours: Adventure tours to Madagascar! Join **Bill Love** seeing and photographing fauna and flora, heavily herp-biased, across the world's least known mini-continent. Much more fun than shoveling snow November–February. Contact him at: BLUE CHAMELEON VENTURES, P.O. Box 643, Alva FL 33920. TEL: (941) 728-2390, FAX: (941) 728-3276, E-MAIL: <blove@cyberstreet.com>.

Video: *Rattlesnake Hunting*, a 60-minute video by a 30-year veteran collector. Don't miss this one! It's as close to being in the field as you can get. (Not a slick commercial production.) Send check or money order for $19.95 plus $3 postage & handling to: D. Wheeler, 2705 Sunset Trail, Riverwoods IL 60015. Allow 4–6 weeks for delivery.

Wanted: smallmouth salamanders, mole salamanders, crawfish frogs and leopard frogs. Will buy or trade for slimy salamanders, wood frogs or bullfrogs. Dave, (847) 679-1530.

Wanted: Egyptian tortoises (*Testudo kleinmanni*). Dan, (303) 347-0394 (evenings only pleas) or fax (303) 347-1172 (24-hour). [CO]

Wanted: male leopard tortoise. Jim, (847) 566-6523.

Wanted: adult female gray-banded king. Henry Cohen, 24 St. John's Place, Buffalo NY 14201, (716) 881-6724.

Wanted: outstanding captive-bred or wild caught *Lampropeltis getula floridana* (*brooksi*), locality data preferred but not required; all subspecies of *L. zonata*; and *L. triangulum multistriata*, *L. t. syspila* and *L. t. gentilis* with exact locality data. Kirk Setser, 414 Wickham Road, Manhattan KS 66502.

Wanted: breeding pair of northern redbelly turtles (*Pseudemys r. rubriventris*), must be legal and captive raised. Top dollar paid for right pair. Barry, (603) 323-7253. [NH]

Wanted: Who has the most attractive bloodline of NORMAL San Diego gophers around? Willing to pay highly overinflated prices or trade for "proven-breeder" c.h. '92 hetero female (Applegate strain), produced 16 eggs this year. Leave message at (815) 624-8204. Steven E. Snow (Rockton IL).

Wanted: northern pine snakes (*Pituophis m. melanoleucus*) originating from states other than New Jersey. Also seeking bullsnakes (*P. m. sayi*) originating from states other than Texas. Bart Bruno, (203) 773-9257. [CT]

Wanted: subadult/adult Hermann's and marginated tortoises. Will pay top dollar or trade for tortoises/reptiles I produce. I breed both of these species and would be interested in trading offspring to obtain new bloodlines. Ted, (520) 575-1268 or E-mail <TortugaTed@aol.com>. [AZ]

Wanted: big-headed turtles; mata mata turtles; Mexican giant mud turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*); exceptionally large common snappers (45 lbs. & up); large alligator snappers (over 90 lbs.); spectacled caiman from Trinidad, Tobago and Surinam; dwarf caiman; smooth-fronted caiman; albino turtles (except red-eared sliders). Walt Loose, (610) 926-6028, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. or after 11:30 P.M. Eastern Time.

Wanted: Styrofoam boxes, any size or shape so long as they're not flimsy, preferably with cardboard liners, willing to pay from $2 to $5. Bring to CHS meetings. Scott J. Michaels, D.V.M, Serpent City, (815) 363-0290.

Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members — $2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (312) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail <MADadder0@aol.com>.

Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, June 21, 1996

The meeting was called to order at 8:19 P.M. Board members Chris Lechowicz, Art Nohlberg and Jack Schoenfelder were absent.

Officers' Reports

The minutes of the May board meeting were read, corrected and accepted. The Treasurer's Report was distributed and accepted. John Driscoll reported that the CHS currently has 1477 members.

Committee Reports

Captive Bred Animal Sale: Joan Moore announced that she will no longer be able to chair this event. We have committed to the Clarion Hotel for August 10, 1996. To date no concrete work has been done to set this in motion. Tonya Maris, Jenny Vollman, Audrey Vanderlinden and Jenny Picciola will compile a list of breeders and vendors and collaborate to make phone calls to those on the list in search of sufficient verbal commitments to make this event worthwhile. The board will make a final decision on the show based on the number of commitments secured.

Legislative: Chris Lechowicz was not present to report.

Library: Jenny Picciola is working with Jill Horwich on a proposal to amend the CHS bylaws regarding the library and its policies.

Shows: Jenny Vollman had no new shows to report. Gary Kostka reported that he was continuing to work with Shedd Aquarium personnel to provide a show there September 28–29. Several board members signed up to bring animals.

Director of Sales Report

Joan Moore announced her pending resignation from this position. She will provide the board with a proposal as to how the situation might be modified so that she can continue. Some possibilities were discussed. The board agreed to do whatever it can to keep the book service available to CHS members. It was decided that no matter who ends up running the service, the entire inventory will be removed from Joan's residence no later than October 31, 1996.

Old Business

Tony Rattin has informed Mike Dloogatch that Nicole Marrello has declined an appointment to the vacant member-at-large position on the board. Tony will seek another candidate.

New Business

Jenny Picciola has volunteered to write letters soliciting donations for the monthly raffles.

Round Table

Gary Kostka thanked Joan on everyone's behalf for her hard work and years of dedication to the CHS bookstore.

Audrey Vanderlinden thanked Jill Horwich for the generous offer of use of her house for this board meeting.

Jenny Picciola thanked Mike Dloogatch for recognizing her work on behalf of the CHS.

Tonya Maris announced she will not chair next year's Live Reptile and Amphibian Show. The president will need to appoint a new chair ASAP.

John Driscoll announced on behalf of Gery Herrmann that a scholarship at the University of Illinois School of Veterinary Medicine has been awarded to Craig Staehle. The CHS contributed $100 plus a free membership to the funding of this scholarship this year.

Gary Fogel made mention that the president needs to organize a nominating committee to choose a slate for this year's elections.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by the Recording Secretary,
Audrey Vanderlinden

Answers to the June Herp-Acrostic

The quotation in last month's Herp-Acrostic was taken from page 84 of *The Lizard Man Speaks* by [Eric R.] Pianka: "Most, but not all, lizards have a small, light-sensitive third eye . . . located beneath the parietal scale on top of their head. Not all reptiles possess the parietal eye—it is lacking in turtles, snakes, and crocodilians and is not present in several families of lizards."

A. Painted turtle
B. Incite
C. Andes
D. Neonate
E. Kermit
F. Alps
G. Their Blood Runs Cold
H. Hispid
I. Elver
J. Lizard's tail
K. It's not easy being green
L. Zoo
M. Alcala
N. Rattle
O. Devilfish
P. Michael Tyler
Q. Alto Pass
R. Nelson's
S. Softshell
T. Pharaoh's serpent
U. Estivate
V. Amelanistic
W. Kiss of death
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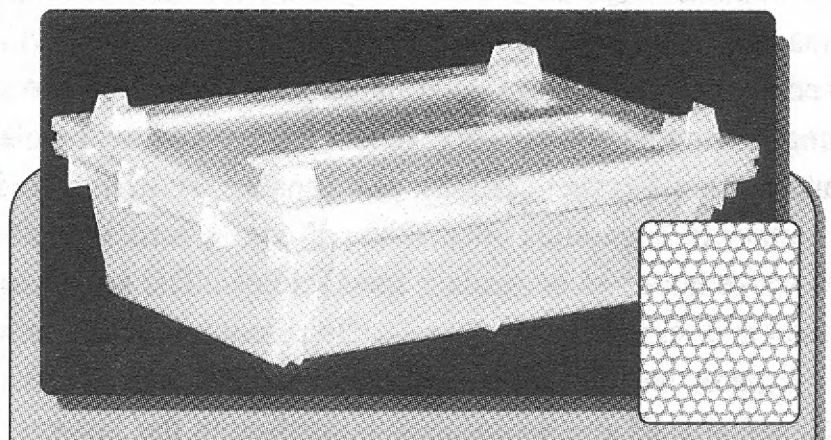

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, July 31, at the Field Museum of Natural History, Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago. The featured speaker will be **Robert T. Zappalorti**, of Herpetological Associates, Inc. His topic will be "The Herpetofauna of the New Jersey Pine Barrens." Mr. Zappalorti is the author of *The Amateur Zoologist's Guide to Turtles and Crocodilians*. He has written articles for the *Bulletin* in years gone by on bog turtles and on northern pine snakes, two animals on which he has done pioneering field work.

We are required to use the entrance on the west side of the museum. We have permission to use the staff parking lot to the west of the museum. Entrance to this lot is from McFetridge Drive, the wide street just to the south, between the museum and Soldier Field. There is also free parking available in the lot to the north of the museum. The #146 CTA bus goes directly to the museum. Unfortunately, it does not operate past 9:00 P.M. However, after the program anyone needing a ride to a CTA stop will have no trouble finding one—just ask any board member.

Turtle Club

The Chicago Turtle Club will meet Sunday, July 28, 1:00–3:30 P.M., at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago.

Amphibian Club

The Amphibian Club will meet on Friday, July 26, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M., at the Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton. Dave Golde will do a live presentation on the amphibians of Chicagoland. There will be photo opportunities. Live tadpoles and toadlets will be available for those who want them. Field and camping trips will also be discussed. For information on this group, call Dave Golde at (847) 679-1530.

ATTENTION: REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN BREEDERS AND VENDORS OF HERP-RELATED MERCHANDISE

On Saturday, August 10, 1996, the Chicago Herpetological Society is sponsoring its first-ever sale of captive-bred reptiles and amphibians, to be held at the Clarion Hotel O'Hare, 6810 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont IL 60018, from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Tables will be available for $40 each for the entire day. For more information phone Tonya Maris at (312) 243-6642.

CENTRAL ILLINOIS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN FAIR

The Central Illinois Herpetological Society will present its 5th annual Reptile and Amphibian Fair on August 17–18 at the Lakeview Museum, University and Lake, in Peoria, Illinois. Hours for this free show will be 10 A.M. – 4 P.M. on Saturday and Noon – 4 P.M. on Sunday. Over 75 species will be on display. No animal sales will take place.

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